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## Chapter 26. The Role of Business for a Sustainable Future: Critical Perspectives

### 26.1. COURSE SUMMARY

Table 26–1

<b>Audience and level of studies</b>	Students (Master)	
<b>Group size</b>	26–50	
<b>Course duration</b>	10 weeks	
<b>Credits</b>	7.5 ECTS	
<b>Workload</b>	Presence: 30h Self-study: 120h	Total: 150h
<b>Contents/primary topics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Megatrends and squeezing operating space</li><li>• Analysis and management of social and ecological vulnerabilities</li><li>• Responsible business stewardship</li></ul>	
<b>Main course objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preparing current and future business leaders and managers for addressing grand challenges and wicked problems of business sustainability by developing their systems-thinking as well as their anticipatory, normative, strategic and interpersonal competences.</li></ul>	
<b>Main teaching approaches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Active learning</li><li>• Inter-/transdisciplinary learning</li><li>• Collaborative learning</li></ul>	
<b>Main teaching methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group discussions</li><li>• Lectures</li><li>• Self-reflection tasks/exercises</li></ul>	
<b>Learning environment</b>	Classroom (face-to-face learning)	

<b>Link to Sustainable Development Goals</b>	<p>SDG 1   No Poverty   End poverty in all its forms everywhere</p> <p>SDG 5   Gender Equality   Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</p> <p>SDG 8   Decent Work and Economic Growth   Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</p> <p>SDG 9   Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure   Build infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</p> <p>SDG 10   Reduced Inequalities   Reduce inequality within and among countries</p> <p>SDG 12   Responsible Consumption and Production   Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</p> <p>SDG 13   Climate Action   Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</p> <p>SDG 17   Partnerships for the Goals   Strengthen the implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development</p> <p>(While the above eight SDGs will be more directly discussed and integrated, deliberations and reflections on megatrends will also touch upon SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being; SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation; SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy; SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities; SDG 14: Life Below Water; SDG 15: Life on Land; SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)</p>
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Table 26–2

<b>Impact assessment:</b>	<b>(None) Low/Medium/High</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
1. Degree of student participation / activeness	High	Students conduct own research and then share with peers by and through reflecting on the deliberations.
2. Degree of student collaboration / group work	High	Students work in groups to share their own findings, reflect on the issues discussed in the module, analyse different perspectives, develop arguments, identify a common ground and work towards a common goal.
3. Degree of student emotional involvement	Medium	Students reflect on readings, lectures and group work (including a stakeholder role play) to develop empathy and articulate their own position.
4. Degree of inter-/transdisciplinary	Medium	Interdisciplinary teaching team and content drawing on environmental sciences, finance, strategy, operations and psychology.
5. Degree of student (self-) reflection	High	Reflexive thinking and writing exercises embedded throughout the module.
6. Degree of experience of real-life situations	Low	Throughout the module students research, examine and analyse case studies based on real-life events and reflect on contemporary challenges.
7. Degree of nature-related experiences	(None)	

Impact assessment:	(None) Low/Medium/High	Explanation
8. Degree of stakeholder integration	Medium	Module requires students to undertake a role play where they conduct own research on different stakeholders and their demands, articulate their own position on a contentious issue from perspective of a specific stakeholder, simulate a stakeholder negotiation in class which is facilitated by an industry expert and then reflect on the experience of this activity.
9. Degree of integration between theory and practice	High	Module consists of lectures offering theoretical perspectives and insights followed by activities, debates and a role play involving direct application of the theoretical ideas.

## 26.2. COURSE INTRODUCTION

The world today is faced with grand challenges or wicked problems in the progression towards a sustainable future – these include issues such as poverty, inequality, modern slavery, climate change induced migration and water shortage, biodiversity loss and water table destruction, and the challenges of creating sustainable consumption and production (Reinecke & Ansari, 2016; Ferraro et al., 2015). Given the large-scale industrial use of natural resources on one hand, and their expertise, presence, resourcefulness, mobility and ability to scale-up on the other hand, private sector businesses are repeatedly called upon to deal with societal grand challenges and contribute to sustainable development (Witte & Dilyard, 2017). Whether and how this can happen, however, remains less clear in practice. There is, therefore, an urgent need to develop awareness, knowledge and skills of current and future leaders and decision makers who can act responsibly and contribute to our combined sustainable futures (Corcoran & Wals, 2004; Sachs et al., 2016). This will require developing appreciation for the unprecedented and complex depth and nuances of legal, regulatory and voluntary self-imposed restrictions that must inevitably be placed on a business if we are to achieve a sustainable future for the world. This is an ambitious task, for it requires developing the knowledge, skills and competencies of students who are expected to be future “problem solvers”, “change agents”, and “transition managers” (Orr, 2002; Loorbach & Rotmans, 2006; Rowe, 2007; McArthur & Sachs, 2009; Willard et al., 2010) to make the world a better and “sustainable” place for humankind to continue to occupy (Dyllick, 2015). Adoption of a learner-centered instructional practice (Bonk & King, 2012) could aid development of students’ abilities to solve current and future

problems with the application of newly acquired knowledge (Biggs & Tang, 2007).

The module aims to prepare current and future managers and leaders to enact business as a force for good by helping them develop the abilities to analyse the challenges of sustainable development and to anticipate, envision and shape a sustainable planetary future. In order to do so the module has been designed with a focus on helping students develop five key competences. These include according to Wiek, Withycombe and Redman (2011) *systems-thinking competence*: “ability to collectively analyze complex systems across different domains ... and scales” (p. 207); *anticipatory competence*: ability to collectively analyze, evaluate images of the future; *normative competence*: “ability to collectively map, specify, apply, reconcile, and negotiate sustainability values, principles, goals, and targets” (p. 209); *strategic competence*: “ability to collectively design and implement interventions, transitions, and transformative governance strategies toward sustainability” (p. 210) and *interpersonal competence*: “ability to motivate, enable, and facilitate collaborative and participatory sustainability research and problem solving” (p. 211).

### 26.3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Table 26–3

Learning objective dimension (UNESCO, 2017)	Learning objective	Competency referred to framework of Wiek et al. (2011)
Cognitive	Ability to recognise the key social and environmental issues and trends influencing and shaping the business landscape	Systems-thinking competence
	Ability to identify and analyse the impacts of business on the environment and society	Systems-thinking competence
	Ability to identify the projected impacts of the environment and society on business	Anticipatory competence
	Ability to reflect on the role and form of business and the form of a sustainable society and the interconnection between the two	Normative competence
	Ability to evaluate the relationship between taught material, research and personal experiences and offer ideas for the future	Strategic competence

Learning objective dimension (UNESCO, 2017)	Learning objective	Competency referred to framework of Wiek et al. (2011)
Socio-emotional	Ability to develop interpersonal skills and empathy	Interpersonal competence
	Ability to convey information to others in a convincing way	Interpersonal competence
	Ability to develop problem-solving abilities	Interpersonal competence
	Ability to reflect on the taught material from an individual/personal standpoint	Normative competence
Behavioural	Ability to articulate the implications of a rapidly changing business environment in the wake of sustainable development challenges	Systems-thinking competence
	Ability to summarise the rationale for businesses to contribute to sustainable development	Normative competence
	Ability to produce recommendations for how businesses may contribute to sustainable development	Strategic competence

## 26.4. COURSE OUTLINE

Table 26–4

	Structure	Session focus	Exercises (out of class)
Week 1	Lecture (2 hours): Module Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code Red for Humanity: the urgency of building a sustainable world and the role of business</li> <li>Module overview, structure, assignment, study plan</li> <li>Key concepts and definitions</li> </ul>	Exercise 1 "The Module and the Self": Sharing of expectations and worries about the module and the topic
	Seminar (1 hour): Introductions & Ice Breaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introductions</li> <li>Ice breaker – favourite ice cream and a quirky/interesting fact about the self</li> </ul>	

	Structure	Session focus	Exercises (out of class)
Week 2	Lecture (2 hours): The Sustainability Imperative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Global megatrends and their societal, firm and individual level impacts and implications</li> <li>A safe and just operating space for humanity – planetary boundaries and doughnut economics, funnel model</li> </ul>	
	Seminar (1 hour): Analysing the Impact of Megatrends	Group work – Exercise 2 (see subchapter “Exercises”, during the seminar instructions)	See subchapter “Exercises” – Exercise 2, after the seminar instructions
Week 3	Lecture (2 hours): Business and the Sustainability Imperative: Squeezing Operating Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding business as a ‘system’ operating within a planetary system facing challenges to retain legitimacy and social license to operate, in the wake of changing societal expectations</li> <li>Understanding survival risks and vulnerabilities (regulatory; market – investor, consumer; operational – supply chain, organisational design and psychology)</li> </ul>	Choosing an industry between automotive and sugar-based food and beverage industry and reading about the trends, challenges, stakeholder demands and changing regulations
	Seminar (1 hour): Understanding the Squeezing Operating Space	Group work – Exercise 3: Discussing the issues raised by consumers, investors, activists and the responses of industry and government in the selected industries to reflect on whether and how the industry can adapt	
Week 4	Lecture (2 hours): Regulatory Vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government as a driver for business responsibility</li> <li>Understanding regulation – public and private regulations</li> <li>Role of judiciary, campaigners, lobbyists, enforcement agencies and citizens</li> </ul>	See subchapter “Exercises” – Exercise 4, before the seminar instructions
	Seminar (1 hour): Mapping the Changing Regulatory Landscape	Group work – Exercise 4 (see subchapter “Exercises”, during the seminar instructions)	
Week 5	Lecture (2 hours): Market Vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changing investor demands, increasing ESG considerations (Guest Lecture)</li> <li>Consumer demands as a driver for business responsibility and sustainability</li> </ul>	See subchapter “Exercises” – Exercise 5, before the seminar instructions
	Seminar (1 hour): Examining the Market Risks	Group work – Exercise 5 (see subchapter “Exercises”, during the seminar instructions)	See subchapter “Exercises” – Exercise 5, after the seminar instructions

	Structure	Session focus	Exercises (out of class)
Week 6	Lecture (2 hours): Operational Vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisational design and psychology: challenges and limitations</li> <li>Political, technical, institutional and other challenges in supply chains</li> </ul>	Reading Padmanabhan et al. (2015) before the seminar
	Seminar (1 hour): Understanding Operational Vulnerabilities	Group work – Exercise 6: Analysing the case of Rana Plaza factory disaster from the perspective of a multinational company	
Week 7	Lecture (2 hours): Business Responsibility and Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why should business take responsibility? – normative, instrumental, political arguments</li> <li>Can and should business set new norms and be stewards of sustainable development?</li> </ul>	Watching videos (Commonwealth Club of California, 2016; Harvard Business Review, 2021; ThePrincesA4S, 2012) and doing own research on Jochen Zeitz (Puma), Paul Polman (Unilever) and Yvon Chouinard (Patagonia) before the seminar
	Seminar (1 hour): Strategies and Practices of Responsible Stewardship	Group work – Exercise 7: Analysing the strategies and decisions of Jochen Zeitz (Puma), Paul Polman (Unilever) and Yvon Chouinard (Patagonia) and how they enabled their companies to become Responsible Stewards. Use the videos and conduct own research.	
Week 8	Lecture (2 hours): Future Proofing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenario planning</li> <li>Business model innovation</li> <li>Rethinking organisational design</li> </ul>	See subchapter “Exercises” – Exercise 8, before the seminar instructions
	Seminar (1 hour): My Industry in 2050	Group work – Exercise 8 (see subchapter “Exercises”, during the seminar instructions)	See subchapter “Exercises” – Exercise 8, after the seminar instructions
Week 9	Lecture (2 hours): Strategic Stakeholder Engagement and Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder identification</li> <li>Stakeholder engagement</li> <li>Stakeholder management</li> <li>Reporting and disclosure</li> </ul>	See subchapter “Exercises” – Exercise 9, before the seminar instructions
	Seminar (1 hour): Role Play on Forest Felling in the Amazon	Group work – Exercise 9 (with an industry expert) (see subchapter “Exercises”, during the seminar instructions)	See subchapter “Exercises” – Exercise 9, after the seminar instructions

	Structure	Session focus	Exercises (out of class)
Week 10	Lecture (2 hours): Critical Reflections	Envisioning a Sustainable Future: critical perspectives and reflections, scenario planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part 1 – The sustainability imperative and what can business do (module summary)</li> <li>• Part 2 – Can business be a force for good and can it survive within systemic and human limitations and if so, in what form?</li> </ul>	
	Seminar (1 hour): Can a Business be a Force for Good? If not, can it survive?	Class debate – Exercise 10	Writing a personal reflective piece on what competences personally needed to develop/strengthen to be able to become a business leader capable of shaping a sustainable future, after the seminar (sharing optional)

## 26.5. TEACHING APPROACHES AND METHODS

Corporate responsibility and sustainability is a topic that requires much critical thinking (Kearins & Springett, 2003). Therefore, for this module, the authors take ‘classroom’ as an important site for criticality, critical engagements and reflections (Perriton & Reynolds, 2018) and draw upon the pedagogical approaches and teaching methods developed/adopted by the critical management education (CME) scholars. They begin by introducing to the students the notion of “Narrative Economics” developed by the 2013 Nobel-laureate economist Prof. Robert James Shiller (2020), which draws attention to the contagion that occurs when narratives constructed by humans go viral, and the power and extent of associated actions, behaviours and their resulting impacts.

Contemporary narratives promote and support acceptance of consumption and growth as a necessity for society (Raworth, 2017). In the broader context of these economics induced logics and the contemporary mainstream management education landscape that predominantly rely on techno-rational managerialist pedagogies and management solutions (Cunliffe, 2020), the module is opened with the IPCC Report (2021). This report alerted the world to “Code Red for Humanity” and students are asked to deliberate and reflect upon the ideas of Rockström et al.’s (2009) “Planetary Boundaries”, Raworth’s (2017) “Doughnut Economics”, Henshaw’s “Funnel” and Aditya Birla’s “Sustainable Business Report” (Aditya Birla Group, 2018) as well as van Zanten and van Tulder’s (2021) “Sustainability Imperatives”.



With widely prevalent and accepted narratives of consumption, growth, luxury and brands as normal ideals and practice, alongside a “burgeoning racist and anti-intellectual public sphere that reduces the public space” (Perriton & Reynolds, 2018, p. 522) for discussing sustainability as an imperative and a social necessity, the lived experience of students will most likely be antithetical to the ideas discussed in the classroom. This dilemma has been aptly identified by Giroux (1981) who argues that educators will have to express those ideals in a context that undermined the possibilities for doing so. Giroux (1981) also argued that the “educational approaches and practices always arise in tension with institutional and social structures” (Perriton & Reynolds, 2018, p. 522). Drawing on Giroux (1981) and Shiller (2020), the authors recognise that educational content and processes are open to dismantling the tutor’s power, acknowledging and exploring differences in classrooms, and widening the lens on both *marginalised individuals* (Perriton & Reynolds, 2018) as well as *marginalised ideas and narratives*. The authors argue that adopting such a critical pedagogical approach is likely to better facilitate and support student’s learning on corporate responsibility and sustainability in classrooms.

In order to encourage these alternate narratives, by drawing upon Giroux, traditional modes of transmission are replaced with learner-tutor relationships in which students are able “to challenge, engage, and question the form and substance of the learning process” (Giroux, 1983, p. 202). While key topics are introduced through lectures, students have to work in groups to draw upon and understand the content and make it relatable. Participative pedagogies based on group work is a way of demystifying the “traditional, manipulative role of the teacher” (Giroux, 1988, p. 39). Therefore, group work is a predominant feature of this module. The activities in this module recognise that the meaning is not something imparted or transmitted from teacher to learner but it is something that learners have to create for themselves and therefore the role of the instructor/module leader/tutor is to act as a catalyst for sustainability related learning (Biggs, 2014). The module, through group work and class discussions, encourages the learner and the teacher to act as co-creators of value, using each other’s experience and knowledge to consolidate module’s objective to develop current and future leaders for a sustainable future (Cobb, 1994; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Yang et al., 2011). Class discussions and debates also facilitate critical thinking and application of the content learnt by framing one’s position and articulating opposing arguments on an issue (Cotton & Winter, 2010).

Unlike the critical management education (CME) approaches followed by some educators this module does not merely substitute mainstream, normative teaching material with critical theoretical or interpretive texts and other content. Rather, the approach here is more aligned to the overall critical movement and

CME approaches developed in early 1990s, i.e. applying critical perspectives to the classroom practice of management education including the roles, values and beliefs of management educators – whereby a theory and practice of process critical CME approach is followed (French & Grey, 1996; Burgoyne & Reynolds, 1997; Currie & Knights, 2003). Every topic is first introduced through lectures alongside key concepts (Bligh & Cameron, 2000) to provide background information and prepare students to engage with individual and collective learning activities (Horgan, 1999). Critical reflections are then encouraged and facilitated both individually and in groups to encourage a deeper level of understanding of corporate responsibility and sustainability issues and challenges to reinforce the intended learning objectives (D’Andrea, 1999; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999) which themselves align with five key competences for sustainability (Wiek et al., 2011). Such reflections, besides facilitating critical thinking and application of learning also contribute to students developing appreciation of plurality of views on the role of business in sustainable development.

Appreciation of plurality is furthered by involving guest lecturers (on finance) and inviting industry experts (to comment on stakeholder role play) which will enable the students to explore topics from multiple perspectives (Robinson & Kakela, 2006; Aragon-Correa et al., 2017; Lozano et al., 2017) and also add variety and spice to the classroom (Nourse, 1995). Such an appreciation is also furthered by class activities which require students to construct scenarios for their company and specific industry and compare and evaluate expected consequences (Alcama, 2008). Appreciation on the challenges of corporate responsibility and sustainability require widening the remit of one’s horizon and therefore the activity of strategic stakeholder engagement as an in-class role play will enable students to act out the role of a stakeholder in a given situation (Rao & Stupans, 2012; Dingli et al., 2013) and in so doing encourage them to develop their own experience of the issues. Individual and class reflections have been in-built throughout to allow students to forge their own relationship with the issues (Griffiths, 1999). The assessment has also been designed to allow students to reflect on key issues and to apply their learning to a specific company/conceptual debate.

## 26.6. EXERCISES

In the following, different exercises are presented in the way given to students in class.

### **Analysing the Impact of Megatrends on Business (Exercise 2)**

*During the seminar*, in individual groups, analyse the impact of a chosen megatrend on the specific industry (Water for the finance and banking industry or Growing social inequality for the apparel industry). Nominate a group member to provide feedback to the class discussion which the tutor will facilitate.

When mapping the impact in groups, consider the following issues:

- How will the megatrend alter the legal and hence operating environment of the industry? Is raw material availability/inflows likely to be impacted? How?
- Who (which stakeholders) may be impacted? How?
- Which business processes are likely to be impacted? How?
- How significant may the impact be?

*After the seminar*, reflect on how social inequality may impact your own industry (where you are currently working or wish to work in).

### **Mapping the Changing Regulatory Landscape (Exercise 4)**

*Before the seminar*, choose a company; either Uber or Facebook.

- For Uber, conduct desk-based research on the case Uber BV v Aslam and others in the UK. You may review the court order, summary of the order and media articles.
- For Facebook, conduct a desk-based search and identify what recent laws and policies have been passed for social media companies like Facebook in the UK.

*During the seminar*, in your groups, discuss the following questions and nominate a group spokesperson to provide feedback to the class discussion which the tutor will facilitate.

- How has the regulatory landscape changed for Uber and Facebook over the last five years?
- What have been the key issues of contention?
- What do the recent court orders and rulings indicate to you?
- How do you see the regulatory landscape evolving for both platform companies as climate change worsens?

- In respective groups, reflect on the following:
  - In February 2021, the Supreme Court in the UK unanimously ruled that the Uber drivers are workers. Uber complied with the 2021 court order but refused to include Uber eats drivers – why?
  - A law on online harm was passed in the UK but social media companies revised guidelines globally – why?

### Examining the Market Risks (Exercise 5)

*Before the seminar*, read and gather information about Boohoo.com and its growth trajectory over the years including the scandals it has been caught up in.

*During the seminar*, discuss the questions below and nominate a group spokesperson to provide feedback to the class discussion which the tutor will facilitate.

Boohoo group PLC is a UK based online retailer. In July 2020 its shares fell drastically and the experts predicted its growth could halve. In your groups discuss:

- What happened in July 2020 and why?
- How was Boohoo’s market performance in December 2020?
- Was what happened in July 2020 reflective of a broader trend or an aberration?
- What lessons can companies learn about ESG related risks from this case?

*After the seminar*, identify the best and the worst performing companies on the stock exchange and examine its ESG credentials.

### My Industry in 2050 (Exercise 8)

*Before the seminar*, choose a company between Google and Tesla and read about it. Reflect on the organisational design of Google and what makes its processes/culture different or reflect on the business model innovation of Tesla.

*During the seminar*, in your company specific groups discuss the following questions and nominate a group spokesperson to provide feedback to the class discussion which the tutor will facilitate.

- What is distinctive about the organisational design/business model of the company?
- To what extent does this company reflect a sustainable company of the future?
- What characteristics would you expect from a sustainable company in 2050? Why?

*After the seminar*; draw on group work readings and deliberations and in class-seminar discussions and write a reflective piece on My Firm/My Favourite Company in 2050 and email it to the module tutor.

### **Class Role Play on Forest Felling in the Amazon (Exercise 9)**

*Before the seminar*, conduct a desk-based review and read about the Amazon forests and the growing concern about deforestation.

*During the seminar*; each group will be representing a different stakeholder group to share views on Forest Felling in the Amazon to set up a cattle ranch. Please choose from one of the following:

- i. the company / family setting up the cattle ranch;
- ii. community representative of the tribal population residing in the area;
- iii. the representative of the Ministry of Economic Development of Brazil;
- iv. the environmental campaigning group working to save the Amazon rainforest;
- v. youth representative of the nearby cities who are actively seeking employment;
- vi. scientists researching the global importance of biodiversity in the Amazon.

In your groups:

- Outline your position – will you or will you not support this decision to deforest the Amazon to set up a cattle ranch?
- Discuss why or why not?
- Develop points in support of your position and for convincing those on the other side.

The class will then attempt to arrive at a consensus and each group will try to convince the other groups in a discussion facilitated by an industry expert. This may or may not happen as each stakeholder is committed to not shift its position. At the end the Ministry of Economic Development of Brazil must decide (with or without consensus) to issue a license for the cattle ranch or not.

*After the seminar*; reflect on your emotions and experiences during and after the exercise. Think about what allowed/or may have enabled the group to arrive at a consensus and share your thoughts with the rest of the class.

## **26.7. ASSESSMENT**

The summative assessment in this module aims to foster the key competences and draws on the learner-centered REACT (Relating, Experiencing, Apply-

ing, Cooperating, Transferring) teaching strategies (Crawford, 2001) which enable students to develop knowledge through social and cognitive interactions (Schunk, 2009). It is designed to enable students to apply their knowledge to their current and future engagements as professionals within organizational settings (Ichii & Ono, 2018). This is done by offering students the choice to submit an essay of 3500 words on either a conceptual/analytical perspective or an applied case study:

- “Operating space for businesses is increasingly reducing: Challenges and Opportunities”. Discuss this statement in light of business responsibility and sustainable development debates that have been discussed in class. You are expected to engage in analytical discussion by using relevant theories, empirical studies, data and examples to substantiate your arguments. You are expected to discuss at least two specific challenges and at least two specific opportunities.
- Choose a company and analyse its approach to sustainable development. You are expected to draw on relevant theory to comment on the challenges facing the company, the strategies it has adopted and to offer at least two feasible recommendations for future proofing to be implemented by 2030.

Both options contribute to the module’s teaching approach by enabling students to reflect on the challenge of sustainable development for business, engage with the module content/theory and apply the knowledge gained by examining the challenges for business and identifying opportunities/offering recommendations for businesses.

## 26.8. PREREQUISITES

- Required prior knowledge from students: None
- Required instructors and their core competencies:
  - Lecturer (competences: sustainability/corporate social responsibility, strategy/operations)
  - Guest Lecturer (Finance expert – part 1 of market vulnerabilities)
  - Industry expert (competences: real-life business expertise and experience of stakeholder management and the concept of building sustainable businesses)
- Required tools: Online collaboration platform (e.g. Moodle/Blackboard)

## 26.9. RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### **Lecture 1: Module Introduction**

- Lozano, R. (2012). Towards better embedding sustainability into companies' systems: an analysis of voluntary corporate initiatives. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 25, 14–26.
- Shiller, R. J. (2020). *Narrative Economics: How stories go viral and drive major economic events*. Princeton University Press.
- Porritt J. (2013). *The world we made: Alex McKay's story from 2050 London*. Phaidon Press.
- Patel, R., & Moore, J.W. (2017). *A history of the world in seven cheap things: a guide to capitalism, nature, and the future of the planet*. University of California Press.
- IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (n.d.). <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/#SPM>

### **Lecture 2: The Sustainability Imperative**

- Lubin, D. A., & Esty, D. C. (2010). The Sustainability Imperative. *Harvard Business Review*, 88(5), 42–50.
- Mittelstaedt, J. D., Shultz, C. J., Kilbourne, W. E., & Peterson, M. (2014). Sustainability as Megatrend: two schools of macromarketing thought. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 34(3), 253–264.
- von Groddeck, V., & Schwarz, J. O. (2013). Perceiving megatrends as empty signifiers: a discourse-theoretical interpretation of trend management. *Futures*, 47, 28–37.
- Rockström, J., Steffen, W., Noone, K., Persson, Å., Chapin III, F.S., Lambin, E., Lenton, T. M., Scheffer, M. C., Folke, H., Schellnhuber, B., Nykvist, C. A. De Wit, T., Hughes, S., van der Leeuw, H., Rodhe, S., Sörlin, P. K., Snyder, R., Costanza, U., Svedin, M., Falkenmark, L., Karlberg, R. W., Corell, V. J., Fabry, J., Hansen, B., Walker, D., Liverman, K., Richardson, P., Crutzen, P. & Foley, J. (2009). Planetary boundaries: exploring the safe operating space for humanity. *Ecology and Society*, 14(2).
- Raworth K. (2017). *Doughnut Economics: seven ways to think like a 21st century economist*. London: Penguin Random House.
- Raworth, K. (2017). A doughnut for the anthropocene: humanity's compass in the 21st century. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 1(2), 48–49.
- Scott, K., Martin, D. M., & Schouten, J. W. (2014). Marketing and the new materialism. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 34(3), 282–290.
- Ozdamar Ertekin, Z., & Atik, D. (2015). Sustainable Markets: Motivating factors, barriers, and remedies for mobilization of slow fashion. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 35(1), 53–69.
- van Zanten, J. A., & van Tulder, R. (2021). Analyzing companies' interactions with the Sustainable Development Goals through network analysis: Four corporate sustainability imperatives. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 30, 2396–2420.

### **Lecture 3: Squeezing Operating Space for Businesses**

- Frig, M., & Sorsa, V. P. (2020). Nation branding as sustainability governance: a comparative case analysis. *Business & Society*, 59(6), 1151–1180.

- Lucas, P., & Wilting, H. (2019). *Towards a safe operating space for the Netherlands: using planetary boundaries to support national implementation of environment-related SDGs*. PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency. The Hague. [https://www.pbl.nl/sites/default/files/downloads/Towards\\_a\\_safe\\_operating\\_space\\_for\\_the\\_Netherlands\\_-\\_3333.pdf](https://www.pbl.nl/sites/default/files/downloads/Towards_a_safe_operating_space_for_the_Netherlands_-_3333.pdf)
- Brondoni, S. (2010). Intangibles, global networks & corporate social responsibility. *Global Networks & Corporate Social Responsibility*, 6–24.

#### **Lecture 4: Regulatory Vulnerabilities**

- Steurer, R. (2013). Disentangling governance: a synoptic view of regulation by government, business and civil society. *Policy Sciences*, 46(4), 387–410.
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## **26.10. GENERAL TIPS FOR TEACHERS**

- Guest lecturers and industry experts may be invited depending on their availability.
- Clearly outline the purpose of group exercises, encourage students to submit through email/blackboard/online portal.
- It is also important to stay flexible about the group exercise: all groups may not always complete but most will do and the purpose is to encourage conversation and discussion using the exercises to highlight key ideas/theories discussed.
- Link discussions and lectures to contemporary events, news articles, documentaries and movies.

- The course can also be delivered in a block teaching format.
- Assessment word count can be adapted according to the student assessment workload guidance at the own institution but ideally it should not exceed 4000 words.
- The mode of homework submission can be adapted to class size – for instance, if more than 30 students, then instead of emailing to tutor, online platform can be used for submissions.

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